THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission
John W. McCormack Building, Room 1101
One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108
(617) 727-9380

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: All Retirement Systems

FROM: Robert F. Stalnaker, Executive Director

RE: Computer Survey

DATE: March 11, 1997

The Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC) is conducting a survey of all Massachusetts Contributory Retirement Systems with regard to a variety of computer related issues. When PERAC moves to its new location, part of our new space will include classrooms for training sessions and conferences. This survey is being conducted so that we can better understand your needs and enhance the services that PERAC provides to you. Please make every effort to complete the survey and return it to Sarah Kelly no later than March 31, 1998.

If you need any clarification about the questions that we are asking, please contact Sarah Kelly at

        Telephone: 617-727-9380, Extension 625
        Fax: 617-227-2320
        E-Mail: Sarah.Kelly@state.ma.us

If your board is relying on manual record keeping practices, you do not need to complete the survey. However, please advise PERAC as to whether you have any plans to automate your operations. If you do not plan on automating, please provide some insights as to why manual methods will continue to be used.

COMPUTER SURVEY

HARDWARE

How many personal computers are being used by the staff members of your retirement board? _____

Please provide the name of the manufacturer(s) of your personal computers and the speed and type of processor for each:

Number of this Type	Manufacturer	Type of Processor	Speed

For Example:

2	Dell	486	66
4	Compaq	Pentium	200 MHz

Are these personal computers the exclusive property of the retirement board and used only by the retirement board staff?   YES ___   NO ___

Are there staff members who do not have access to a computer? YES ___ NO ___
    If yes, it is because:
        They do not need a personal computer to do their jobs? ___
        Cost is prohibitive?___
        Other?_____

Are the personal computers at your office part of a Local Area Network (LAN) and/or a Wide Area Network (WAN)?
LAN: YES____   NO ____
WAN: YES____   NO ____

    For Your Information:
        (LAN =A computer network limited to the immediate area, usually same office or same building or floor of a building.)

        (WAN) = A network of computers that covers a larger area)

Are the computers that are used by retirement board staff members linked to computers in other offices:
Town Treasurer? ___
Custodial Bank? ___
Software Maintenance Vendor? ___
Other: _____

INTERNET ACCESS

Do the personnel of your retirement board have access to the Internet via retirement board computers?
_____ YES   ____NO

Is Internet access restricted to a particular person or persons? _____

What Internet Browsers (software packages that read and display Web pages) are being used in your office?

Netscape Navigator ____   Windows Explorer: _____   Other: _____

Has Adobe Acrobat Reader Software (can be downloaded from the Internet at no cost) been loaded onto your personal computers so that you can read PDF files(Portable Document Format) on Internet Web Sites?
_____ YES   ____NO

Who is your Internet Service Provider (provides a high-speed dedicated communications line to the Internet)? _____

If Internet access is not currently available, is it planned for the future?   If so, when?_____

If Internet access is not available and not planned, why not?
    Cost____
    Need More Technical Assistance ___
    Not perceived to be Necessary___
    Access would violate Office Policy?____

Describe the configuration of the PC(s) through which you access the Internet?

Quantity of This Type of PC	Type of processor and its speed	Size of Monitor	Operating System	Speed of Modem

For Example

2	Pentium 200mhz	17 inch	Windows NT	36.6 kb

Does your board maintain a home page on the Internet? YES___   NO_____

If yes, What is your Address?_____

__ELECTRONIC MAIL__

Do the personnel of your retirement board have access to electronic mail via retirement board computers? YES ____   NO ____

If yes, what electronic mail package do you use? _____

Do you use electronic mail to communicate with:
Retirement board personnel? ___
Other town offices?____
PERAC?____

If electronic mail access is not available and not planned, why not?
        Cost? ____
        Need More Technical Assistance? ___
        Not perceived to be Necessary? ___
        Access would violate Office Policy? ____

__SHRINK-WRAPPED SOFTWARE__

What Word Processing application do you use?
        Microsoft Word: ____   Word Perfect: ____   Other: _____

What spreadsheet software do you use?
        Excel: _____   Lotus: ____   Other: _____

Are there other applications that you have found particularly helpful?
_____

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RETIREMENT BOARD APPLICATIONS

	Membership	Accounting	Investments	Payroll (for retirees)	Other Application (if applicable)	Other Application (if applicable)
Name of Vendor*						
Version/ Release Level (Date of Last Upgrade)						
Language Used to Create Application						
Location of Application**						

*If application was developed in-house, please note that outside vendors were not used
**Is the application on a personal computer, or a Macintosh, or a mini - computer or a mainframe?

If you are using TACS software, do you have the Windows version or the DOS version?_____

Do you plan on upgrading from DOS to Windows? YES ___   NO ___   If yes, when? _____

What electronic media do you use to transmit files to PERAC?
  ____3 (1/2) inch diskette   _____5(1/4) floppy diskette   _____tape

Could you use another method for file transfer?
_____Zip Drive   _____Electronic File Transfer (example: via the Internet or as E-Mail attachments)

If such methods were available to you, would you prefer to use them? ____

MAINTENANCE FEES

	Name of Vendor	Telephone Number	Hourly Rate	Monthly Rate	Annual Rate
Hardware					
Software					

QUALITY OF SOFTWARE MAINTENANCE & SERVICES

	Poor	Adequate	Good
Telephone Response to Questions			
Problem Solving Skills?			
Timeliness of response from identification of problem to installation of revised program			
Are upgrades well tested and documented			
Quality of written documentation			
Quality of training			

OTHER SOFTWARE ISSUES

Do you find your retirement board applications easy to use?
_____
_____
_____

Do your retirement board applications include enough built-in cues and controls so that opportunities for data entry errors are minimized?
_____
_____

Do you have ad hoc reporting capabilities so that the retirement board staff can generate new reports and queries on an as needed basis, without seeking help from your software vendor?
_____
_____
_____

Are there additional features and functions that you would like to have incorporated into your retirement board applications?
_____
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YEAR 2000 COMPLIANCY ISSUES

During the past 25 years, many computer systems (operating system software as well as applications) have been designed so that date fields utilize just two digits to designate the year. At the turn of the millennium, these systems will not be able to correctly interpret the year "00" unless they are redesigned to incorporate four-digit fields to designate the century. The Year 2000 date change is most likely to cause problems in the following areas: age determination, sorting by date, comparisons, century derivation, unique number generation, and leap year determination.

Does your retirement board have a staff member assigned to handle Year 2000 issues? YES__   NO__

If yes, what is that individual's name? _____

Has your software been surveyed to determine whether or not it is Year 2000 compliant?
　　　　　　YES ____   NO ___

Are all applications that were created in-house Year 2000 compliant? YES____   NO ___

Are all applications that were developed for you by outside vendors Year 2000 compliant?
　　　　　　YES____   NO ___

Do you feel that you have sufficient information about the impact of Year 2000 on computers and applications? YES____   NO ___

COMPUTER EXPERTISE

Do you attend seminars offered by your software vendor? YES _____   NO ____

Do you attend user group meetings with people from other retirement boards who use the same software that you do? YES _____   NO __

Do the personnel in your retirement board have sufficient computer expertise or easy access to computer expertise to make optimal use of the technology available to them? YES _____   NO __

Do you believe that members of your staff would benefit from attending computer classes?
　　　　　　YES _____   NO __
　　　If YES, which courses would be most beneficial?
　　　　　Word Processing
　　　　　Spreadsheets
　　　　　Use of your retirement board software (TACS, etc.)
　　　　　Other: _____

PERAC's ROLE

Please identify the ways in which you believe PERAC could help you to address computer related issues?

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